(22) What are the rules for valuation which should apply in common to the whole State and what are the rules that should vary in specified localities?

The Member next deplored the manner in which non-bearing cocoanut and other kinds of trees were valued by the commissioners, and said that, in the case of the latter classes of trees, some of which yielded at irregular intervals in varying quantities, the commissioners did not proceed on any fixed standard, but made their valuation as it pleased them.

He also spoke about the vagaries of the commissioners in the preparation of their reports and said that, ever since the High Court decision in 18. T. L. R., 93, the *thadasters'* opinion had lost its importance and they were never consulted by the commissioners. The commissioners did their work in the most arbitrary way without associating the respectable people of the locality in their work. The circular regarding the selection of the commissioners with the consent of the Vakils did not also produce the desired result.

To remedy the evils complained of, the Member suggested that a law should be passed on the lines of Madras Act I of 1900, and that elaborate rules having the force of law should also be framed under that law for regulating the procedure to be adopted in the valuation of trees other than bearing cocoanut trees. The procedure might be the same for all places or vary with particular localities according to custom. That would avoid any arbitrary discretion being vested in the commissioners. The Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, who was expected to know all the details, might be asked to frame the rules in consultation with the judicial officers. Those rules with suitable modifications might be applied to the land acquisition proceedings also.

With regard to the preparation of reports, the Member was of opinion that the commissioners should be asked to associate in their work a few respectable *thadasters* of each locality who should be carefully selected in advance in consultation with the revenue officers. There should also be provision to punish the commissioners for proved irregularities, but incompetent commissioners should be struck off the list. Special commissioners should invariably be appointed for works of a special nature, such as valuation of costly structures and the like. Unless the question was seriously taken in hand by Government and action taken on the lines suggested, there would be no end to the number of suits and appeals and to the consequent hardship and loss to the public in general.

Dewan's reply.—The Member's representation will be referred to the High Court for their opinion.

IV. PRODUCTION.

(1) Agriculture.

37. Appointment of a Mycologist for rubber estates.

Mr. J. R. Vincent (Member, Mundakayam Planters' Association) represented the need of a Mycologist for investigating into, and devising measures for the prevention of, fungoid diseases appertaining to rubber and requested Government to give rubber planters an annual grant for the purpose. There was no doubt that the rubber tree was extremely susceptible to attacks of fungoid diseases which affected all parts of the trees. They had discovered diseases of the stem, roots and leaves and, more important still, diseases of the bark from which was extracted the rubber of commerce. Many of those diseases were imperfectly known and some were absolutely new to science. Therefore, laymen could not devise means for their prevention or eradication. The extreme gravity of the situation might be realized from the fact that, though the industry was a young one and occupied but 45,000 acres of land, an authority in South India had stated that fully one-third of their potential crop was lost to them through the effects of disease. It was not witho ot

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some reason, therefore, that they feared an increase of those diseases and were strenuously adopting every means at their disposal to obtain scientific advice to control them. That could be done effectively only with the hearty co-operation of all rubber planters, whether Indian or European, and with the encouragement of the State.

It was well known that the majority of Indian rubber planters had but a few acres or trees and that they did not always adopt the most scientific and effective modes of cultivation. It was, therefore, to be feared that, should those diseases increase in number and intensity, the result would be the extinction of Indian-owned and managed areas. In the first place, the Indian planters had not had the opportunity to learn and realize the importance and gravity of the question, nor had they the facility of organization enjoyed by the European planters, because they had, as a rule, small interests which were scattered; and, so far as he was aware, they had no associations analogous to theirs. It was, therefore, the duty of the State to step in and help them in their efforts to make a living in that practically new industry; and one of the best and most practical methods of doing that was for Government to help them in the appointment of a Mycologist. Any discoveries of effective methods of control or measures of prevention of fungoid diseases would be made public and Indian as well as European planters were bound to benefit by them. The result of the work of the Mycologist would be published in English and an arrangement could be made with the Agricultural Department to make translations into the Vernacular and also to publish amongst the Indian planters all the information obtained.

Under the circumstances, it would be clear that the request for Government financial aid was a reasonable one that should receive sympathetic consideration and they had every hope that Government would look at the question in that light and do their best for them.

They were aware that His Highness' Government had promised an annual contribution of Rs. 3,000 towards the Scientific Department whose organisation had been recently agreed to by the Madras Government and the thanks of the community were due for the help thus given. The Member then proceeded to observe that the total area under rubber industry in Southern India was about 25,000 acres of which 20,000 were in Travancore. The Indian-owned rubber estates in Travancore covered 5,000 acres, so that the total acreage owned by the Indians in Travancore was about one-fourth. If Government could see their way to give them one-fourth of the cost, it would be equitable.

Dewan.—As a result of correspondence, the Travancore Government have to pay to the Madras Government an annual contribution of Rs. 3,000 on the latter agreeing to arrange to have one or two stations in Travancore as the head-quarters of the scientific men. One of them is a Mycologist and his head-quarters will probably be at Peermade. This arrangement is intended primarily to assist the rubber industry and other planting enterprises in Travancore. What you apparently want is further help from this State direct. I shall consider your request.

Member.—I am obliged to you, Sir. Including the initial expenditure, about Rs. 30,000 will be required for the first year. There is the annual recurring expenditure of Rs. 16,000. All these will probably come to a large sum. It will be impossible for a Scientific Officer, however efficient he may be, to do more than look after the interests of tea and coffee planters, and rubber planters have accordingly decided to employ a specialist for themselves, and it is with that idea that the planters have approached the Government for the help which, we trust, will be freely given.

Dewan's reply.—Government would like to know the details of what the planters are themselves going to do in the way of securing a Mycologist. On receipt of that information, the whole question will be considered.

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